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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BULLETIN

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Notes.

The staff of the Museum has been increased by the appointment of Harry B. Sherman (Harvard, '04) as assistant in the Director's office.

John Briggs Potter, Keeper of Paintings, will be absent from the Museum until the end of the year, having gone to Europe to make certain studies in connection with his work here.

Having in mind the arrangement of the new Museum, the Trustees have decided to bring the Chinese collections into the same department as the Japanese, under the title of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art, with Paul Chalfin as Curator.

Oliver S. Tonks, Assistant Curator of Classical Antiquities, has resigned his position in the Museum and accepted an appointment at the University of Vermont. He will be succeeded by B. H. Hill, late of Columbia University and the American School at Athens.

During the great convention of the National Educational Association, in July, free admission to the Museum was granted to all its members. In the eight days from Sunday, July 5, to Sunday, July 12, both inclusive, the attendance was as follows: free admissions, 20,758; paid admissions, 1,356; number attending a special reception given on the evening of July 7, 1,400; total, 23,514.

An important addition has recently been made to the collection of casts, as the gift of Edward Dean Adams of New York. This is a full-size reproduction, in plaster, of one of the Greek sarcophagi found at Sidon in 1887, and now in the Imperial Museum of Constantinople—the one spoken of as “No. 6” in Hamdy Bey and Théodore Reinach's *Une Nécropole royale à Sidon*. The original is of pure Greek workmanship, its probable date being about 300 B. C. The sides are plain, the top and base richly decorated. It has never been reproduced before, and this copy was made in Boston, under the direction of Francis H. Bacon, from casts of details which were generously supplied for the purpose by Hamdy Bey, Director of the Imperial Museum, and from drawings in the above-mentioned book.

Two Paintings by Rembrandt.

The Museum has recently purchased two paintings by Rembrandt, which are exhibited in the First Picture Gallery. One of these is a hitherto practically unknown example, representing **An old Man**, painted upon an oak panel measuring 74 x 60 cm. He is turned towards the left, the body in profile, the head three-quarters front and looking down. He wears a loose brown cloak, with fur-lined sleeves and a large fur collar. His arms are folded, and the right hand is laid against his breast, the left being invisible. The face is thin and wrinkled,

with bleary eyes, a long, hooked nose, and a short, scrubby beard. The open mouth, disclosing a ragged row of teeth, adds distinctly to the senility which characterizes the expression. The head is bald, save for a thin growth of hair which imperfectly covers the sides and the region about the crown.

The picture is unsigned, and the evidence of its authorship is consequently internal. It is, however, so strong as to leave no doubt on the matter, and de Groot, the eminent Dutch student of Rembrandt, who has examined the picture, writes: “It is an early work by Rembrandt, of very fine quality, and of excellent preservation.”

A few slight retouches on the head have been removed since its arrival at the Museum, and the original surface now stands out unblemished, and apparently as brilliant as when it left the master's hand. The color is a most characteristic example of Rembrandt's golden glow; and the masterly drawing of both head and hand places the picture among the more important of his early works. The person represented is one who appears in a number of Rembrandt's early paintings and etchings; and the authorities have agreed that there is strong reason for believing that the model for these was the artist's father, the miller Harmen Gerritsz van Rijn, who was depicted in various ways and under different aspects, as suited the artist's fancy, although easily recognizable as the same individual through them all. The father died in April, 1630, a fact which warrants us in assigning that year as the approximate date of our picture, especially as the etchings which most closely resemble it bear that date. Rembrandt was then either twenty-three or twenty-four years old.

This picture was formerly in a mansion in Worcestershire, England, beyond which nothing has yet been learned here of its history. It was secured for the Museum by Walter Gay, and was purchased with a portion of the bequest of Arthur Rotch.

The second painting is the “**Danaë**,” which formerly belonged to the late Francis Brooks of this city, and has hung in the Museum for a number of years. It was acquired by Mr. Brooks's father in Paris in 1854. Mr. Brooks always maintained that it was by Rembrandt, but his opinion was not universally accepted, owing partly to the fact that the surface of the picture was so obscured by an accumulation of dirt and disintegrated varnish that many of its details were wholly invisible. Last year it was carefully cleaned in the Museum, with the result that it was found to be in excellent condition, rich and warm in color, with an interesting landscape in the background. In the lower left-hand corner are the signature and date,—Rembrandt, 1652,—the existence of which had not been suspected by its previous owners. The picture is on canvas, measuring 72 x 91 cm. It represents Mercury as the messenger of Jove, with wand and winged hat and feet, kneeling and offering a bag of gold to the blushing Danaë. Both figures are clothed in brilliant costumes of Rembrandt's time, and the faces are typically Dutch. The foreground is architectural, the hour is early evening, with lights in the distance, and behind the principal figures is an old woman, possibly the Nurse of the fable, filling a jug from the basin of a fountain. This picture was purchased with a portion of the Martha Ann Edwards Fund.

Photographs of both paintings may be had at the entrance of the Museum.